



Economic Impact Study of
Helena Regional Airport
2026

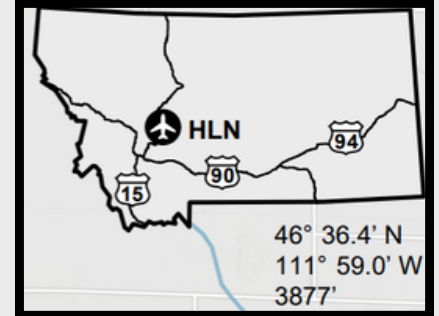


MONTANA
Department of Transportation

Helena Regional Airport Impact

Helena Regional Airport is a public-use commercial service airport located in Helena, the state capital, in Lewis and Clark County. The airport provides scheduled commercial service alongside significant general aviation activity, handling approximately 30,000 general aviation and 4,500 commercial operations annually. The airfield features three runways, the primary measuring 9,000 feet. The facility is one of three permanent air tanker bases in Montana and the only one in the state that can accommodate Very Large Air Tankers such as the DC-10.

As the airport serving Montana's capital city, Helena Regional supports state government operations, legislative travel, and agency connectivity. The airport also hosts 23 based military aircraft and supports military training operations. Agricultural spraying, flight training, emergency medical aviation, and search and rescue further contribute to the airport's role as a versatile aviation facility serving central Montana.



Total Economic Impact on Montana



Jobs
2,492



Economic Impact
\$394.0 Million



Payroll
\$181.6 Million

Qualitative Impacts

In addition to generating substantial economic impacts, this airport supports a variety of harder to quantify “Qualitative Impacts” that support critical statewide safety and enterprise. The 2026 Montana Statewide Economic Impact of Airports Study documents the following non-inclusive list of qualitative impacts associated with the airport:



Aerial Firefighting
Supports Wildland Firefighting Operations.



Police/Law Enforcement
Supports Police and Emergency Response Ops



Emergency Medical Aviation
Supports Air Ambulance Operations



Military Exercise/Training
Used for Military Training and/or Transit Flights



Corporate/Business Activity
Supports Corporate and Business Activity



Agriculture Support
Supports Agriculture through Aerial Application and/or Other

Source: Montana Statewide Economic Impact of Airports.

Montana Airports Support Our State



Jobs
39,400



Economic Impact
\$6.4 Billion



Payroll
\$2.4 Billion

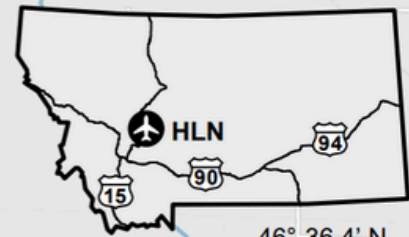
Montana's airport system functions as a critical component of the state's transportation and economic infrastructure, enabling connectivity across a large and geographically dispersed landscape. Through scheduled commercial service and general aviation activity, airports provide access between Montana communities and regional, national, and international markets, supporting passenger travel, freight movement, and time-sensitive operations that cannot be efficiently served by surface transportation alone.

Beyond mobility, Montana's airports support a broad range of economic activity that contributes to employment, income generation, and business operations throughout the state. Aviation-related enterprises, on-airport and nearby businesses, visitor spending associated with air travel, and ongoing investment in airport facilities collectively generate economic activity at the local, regional, and statewide levels. These effects extend across multiple sectors, including tourism, healthcare, construction, professional services, and natural resource industries.

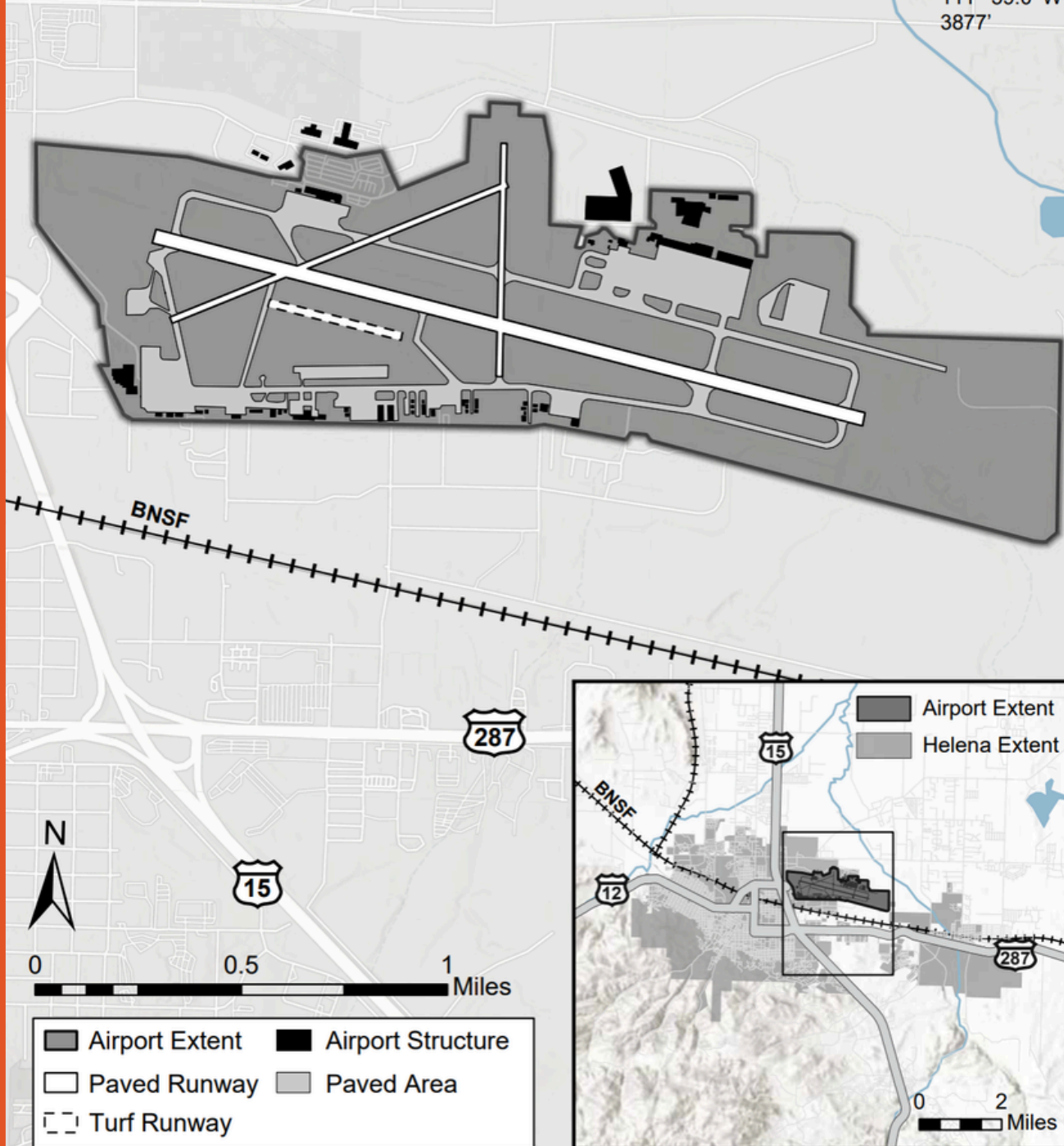
To document both the economic contributions and broader community functions of the state's aviation system, the Montana Department of Transportation undertook a comprehensive, statewide evaluation of Montana's airports. The **2026 Montana Statewide Economic Impact of Aviation** study examines the full scope of airport-related activity, including aviation and non-aviation businesses, visitor spending, capital investment, and secondary economic effects, while also identifying the specific roles individual airports play in supporting residents, businesses, and critical services across Montana.

Helena Regional Airport (HLN)

Helena, MT



46° 36.4' N
111° 59.0' W
3877'



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